



Security Council

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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 26 June 1991, at 6.35 p.m.

President: Mr. BECHIO

(Côte d'Ivoire)

Members: Austria
Belgium
China
Cuba
Ecuador
France
India
Romania
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yemen
Zaire
Zimbabwe

Mr. HOHENFELLNER
Mr. NOTERDAEME
Mr. JIN Yongjian
Mr. ZAMORA RODRIGUEZ
Mr. POSSO SERRANO
Mr. MERIMEE
Mr. MENON
Mr. MUNTEANU
Mr. VORONTSOV

Mr. RICHARDSON
Mr. WATSON
Mr. AL-ASHTAL
Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA
Mr. MUMBENGEWI

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The meeting was called to order at 6.45 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND KUWAIT

LETTER DATED 26 JUNE 1991 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/22739)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Anbari (Iraq) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them a letter dated 26 June 1991 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, (S/22739).

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of your office and the manner in which you have conducted it thus far this month. I extend my congratulations also to your predecessor, Ambassador Li of China.

My delegation appreciates very much the Secretary-General's letter of this morning enclosing the shocking reports from Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, and Dr. Hans Blix, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), concerning the treatment accorded to the IAEA and Special Commission nuclear inspection team by the Government of Iraq over the last five days. Those reports indicate incontrovertibly that the Government of Iraq has obstructed the work of the inspection team in carrying out the mandate to implement the destruction, removal or rendering useless of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The members of the Security Council have also seen other evidence that confirms fully the findings presented by Ambassador Ekeus and Dr. Blix.

It is patently clear that Iraq is engaged in nuclear deception. The United States is deeply dismayed by the Iraqi régime's unmistakable flouting of its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (1991). This calls into serious question other commitments and reports the Government of Iraq has purportedly made in compliance with resolution 687 (1991). This incident, however, is only one example of Iraqi failure to abide by its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

The specific case at hand involves Iraqi deception with regard to its nuclear-weapons-related activities. Paragraph 12 of resolution 687 (1991) obligates Iraq to cooperate with the Special Commission and the IAEA. Iraq is

(Mr. Watson, United States)

required to facilitate, and cooperate with any and all on-site inspections the Special Commission and the IAEA deem necessary. Resolution 687 (1991) also requires Iraq to declare all items related to the production of nuclear-weapons-usable material. Iraq accepted these obligations when it accepted resolution 687 (1991), thereby setting the stage for the Council to declare that a ceasefire had gone into effect. In addition, the Iraqi Government, in letters to the Secretary-General - most recently on 11 June - has pledged to cooperate with the Special Commission and the IAEA.

Despite its obligations and assurances, Iraq has acted to subvert the letter and the spirit of the provisions of resolution 687 (1991). There is ample evidence from multiple sources that Iraq has been conducting a covert nuclear programme that has included activities related to the production of nuclear-weapons-usable material. We know that Iraq was carrying out its nuclear programme at a series of sites. Prior to the IAEA/Special Commission inspections, Iraq began to dismantle its nuclear infrastructure. We know that some of this equipment was moved to the Abu Gharaib site. The Special Commission and IAEA have been fully briefed on this information and on our belief that the Abu Gharaib facility was being used as a temporary storage site for equipment from Iraq's undeclared uranium-enrichment programme.

As the briefing members of the Security Council received this morning made clear, equipment associated with an undeclared Iraqi uranium-enrichment programme was at that site prior to 22 June. Iraq is required under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) to declare and make such equipment available for inspection. Instead, that equipment has been removed. Even as Iraqi work crews were frantically removing the equipment, Iraqi officials were barring

(Mr. Watson, United States)

the Security Council-mandated inspection team access to that site. At one point the team had to move aside to allow the heavy moving equipment to proceed into the site. Only now, after it has spent several days removing equipment and material, has Iraq allowed the inspection team access to the site. This does not constitute compliance with resolution 687 (1991). This is obstructionism combined with an attempt to conceal equipment that Iraq is required to make available for inspection and appropriate treatment.

The episode at Abu Gharaib reveals a consistent pattern of Iraqi Government deceit and obfuscation on this issue. We have indisputable evidence, drawn from many sources, that Iraq has been seeking to produce unsafeguarded nuclear material and to acquire nuclear weapons, contrary to its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its full-scope safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Our evidence includes - but is not limited to - statements from a former Iraqi nuclear official, the results of the IAEA/Special Commission inspection in May, the long record of Iraqi attempts illegally to acquire sensitive nuclear items from abroad, and photographs, some of which members of the Council have seen.

There are additional sites associated with Iraq's nuclear-weapons programme. Abu Gharaib was merely a storage site. We have confirmed the existence of an extensive nuclear infrastructure in Iraq, including a number of facilities intended for the production of weapons-grade nuclear material and for the development of nuclear weapons. While the war apparently interrupted operations at these sites, Iraq remains obliged under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) to provide a prompt and complete declaration of all such nuclear facilities and items to the IAEA and the Special Commission.

(Mr. Watson, United States)

Instead, Iraq has tried to conceal as much of its nuclear-weapons programme as possible, moving key items away from nuclear sites into temporary storage at other locations. Clearly, if Security Council resolution 687 (1991) is to have any meaning, the Council must ensure that Iraq grants the IAEA and Special Commission inspection teams full and immediate access to designated sites. The Council must also ensure that Iraq provide a complete declaration of all of its nuclear-weapons-related items, including those items that were spirited away from Abu Gharaib.

This episode demonstrates that Iraq has been doing everything it can to conceal the full extent of its unsafeguarded nuclear-enrichment programme, which we believe is directed towards development of nuclear weapons. The Council needs to recognize that the stark nature of Iraqi deception in this area calls into serious question the accuracy of Iraqi declarations with respect to other items, facilities and materials proscribed under the provisions of resolution 687 (1991), as well as Iraq's intent to comply fully with the resolution's mandate.

Given the example in the nuclear field, are we to believe the Iraqi Government's outright denial of the existence of a biological weapons programme? We have reason to believe the contrary. Given the example in the nuclear field, are we to believe that the Iraqis have faithfully declared their holdings of long-range ballistic missiles and chemical munitions? We have reason to believe the contrary. In fact, Iraq has underreported its ballistic missile and chemical warfare stocks and it denies it has a biological capability. There is also strong evidence that the Iraqis have attempted to hide substantial portions of their missile and chemical munition infrastructure from access by the United Nations Special Commission.

(Mr. Watson, United States)

The Council has recently completed a review of Iraq's policies and practices and its performance record regarding implementation of resolution 687 (1991). Wisely, the Security Council made no decision to lift the economic sanctions that remain in place against Iraq. So long as Iraq fails to comply fully and unequivocally with the requirements of resolution 687 (1991), the Council should not consider altering those sanctions.

Iraq must declare and make available for scrutiny any and all other nuclear-weapons-related equipment and material. Iraq must also make a full accounting of its ballistic-missile-and-other-weapons-of-mass-destruction capabilities. Iraq must provide full and complete access for the Security Council-mandated Inspection Teams to that material and to all sites associated with this programme. Anything less makes hollow Iraqi commitments to abide by all the provisions of the resolution.

Furthermore, the Security Council must reiterate its determination to ensure that Iraq complies with the Council's binding decisions. Let us be direct and clear: Iraq must comply fully with all the provisions of resolution 687 (1991), including its provisions on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles. In this regard, the equipment removed from the Abu Gharaib site must be declared and made available to the IAEA and the Special Commission for inspection.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. MERIMEE (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation most strongly deplores the fact that the Iraqi Government has hindered the proper functioning of the Nuclear Inspection Team now in Iraq,

(Mr. Merimee, France)

thus violating several provisions of resolutions 687 (1991) and 699 (1991), despite Iraq's undertakings in that respect.

Paragraphs 12 and 13 of resolution 687 (1991) are clear. Iraq is forbidden to acquire or develop nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material or any subsystems or components or any research, development, support or manufacturing facilities related to the above.

To carry out his inspection mission in that connection, the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with the support and cooperation of the Special Commission, is entitled to carry out on-site inspections, even on sites not declared by Iraq. Such access, at any time and in any place, to sites declared by the Iraqi authorities or not, is the condition for the success of the verification mission under way in Iraq. Such access, free and unconditional, was therefore specified in the Secretary-General's plan for the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991), which the Council adopted in its resolution 699 (1991).

It is true that the Iraqi Government has permitted the Inspection Team to enter the site, but the fact remains that four days were lost, four days during which possible traces of impermissible activities could have been eliminated. That Iraqi violation of several provisions of resolutions 687 (1991) and 699 (1991) is extremely serious and must never be repeated.

If necessary, the Security Council would have to consider any further breach by the Iraqi Government and take the measures necessary to ensure close cooperation between Iraq and the Special Commission and the IAEA, whether their inspections are announced or unannounced.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) (interpretation from French): At the outset I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for June. You have already amply demonstrated your qualities and experience in guiding the work of the Council.

I wish also to congratulate your predecessor, the representative of China, Ambassador Li Daoyu, on the skill with which he discharged his duties last month.

This morning, like other members of the Council, I read the letters addressed to the Secretary-General by Ambassador Ekeus and the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Blix. They call attention to a most serious matter: the Special Commission established pursuant to section C of resolution 687 (1991) was prevented from inspecting an Iraqi site, in violation of the binding provisions of paragraph 12 of resolution 687 (1991).

This morning too members of the Council were informed about certain factors that establish the presumption that Iraq is attempting to conceal the existence of an ability to produce fissionable materials. That would be a blatant violation of the obligations set out in paragraph 12 of resolution 687 (1991).

We shall read with great interest the report to which Mr. Blix refers in his letter of 26 June. That additional report by Mr. Zifferero, Chief IAEA Inspector, who participated in the recent mission to Iraq, should enable us fully to assess Iraqi obstruction in this matter. We expect the Iraqi authorities speedily to make the necessary arrangements to inform the Special Commission about the site to which the equipment seen during the first attempt to inspect the Abu Gharab Army Barracks has been transported.

(Mr. Noterdaeme, Belgium)

We welcome the convening of this formal meeting of the Security Council to consider these events. This is a serious matter that should be brought to the attention of the international community and world public opinion.

We earnestly hope, Mr. President, that you will formally remind Iraq of its obligations under Security Council resolutions, and particularly under paragraph 12 of resolution 687 (1991), which obliges Iraq to submit to all inspections demanded by the Special Commission and the IAEA, and which reaffirms the prohibition of any nuclear production capacity for military purposes.

In our view, by shirking its responsibilities in this case Iraq has called into question its formal undertaking to respect all the provisions of resolution 687 (1991). We cannot fail to be deeply disturbed by this development.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Belgium for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): Like previous speakers I cannot but voice the concern of my Government about what appears to have been an effort by Iraq to deny an International Atomic Energy Agency/Special Commission Inspection Team unhindered and immediate access to a designated site in Baghdad and to remove objects that had previously been seen there by the Team.

This is a grave violation of Iraq's obligations under resolution 687 (1991) which cannot be tolerated by this Council. We urge the Iraqi authorities not to repeat or continue their uncooperative attitude, but rather to comply fully with their obligations and to realize that anything less would entail unwelcome consequences.

Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom): We have before us the letters of Ambassador Ekeus and Dr. Blix of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). They are very clear. Indeed, they could not be clearer. They demonstrate that Iraq has violated paragraphs 12 and 13 of resolution 687 (1991). They demonstrate that Iraq has violated its own acceptance of that resolution, and they demonstrate also that Iraq has violated the exchange of letters which its Government signed with the Special Commission.

The letters also make clear that there has been some frenzied activity on the site in question during the last few days and that equipment has been hastily removed from that site, and although I take note of the fact that the inspection took place on a religious holiday, I am bound to say that that does not seem to have hindered the speed and promptness with which Iraqi personnel have acted during those days.

This Council created the Special Commission and this Council gave it a very specific mandate, which was to locate and destroy all Iraq's nuclear-capable material, as well as all its chemical and biological weapons and all ballistic missiles over a certain range.

The Council has to support the Special Commission in its work and to do so quickly. They will have many other inspections to carry out in the near future and they need to be assured of prompt access to designated sites wherever and whenever they want.

In my delegation's view therefore, the message from this Council must be twofold: first, that Iraq must never again obstruct the work of the Special Commission and of the IAEA, and, secondly, that the Iraqi authorities at the highest appropriate level must be called upon to reaffirm their commitment to cooperate fully with the Special Commission and the IAEA, not just in word but in deed.

Mr. POSSO SERRANO (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Ecuador is very pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over our deliberations. Our thanks go also to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, who discharged his duties with such ability last month.

The inspection of Iraqi nuclear facilities is an inescapable prerequisite for the destruction, neutralization or removal of Iraq's nuclear arsenal. It is fundamental that the Government of Baghdad, in expressly accepting resolution 687 (1991) committed itself not only to allow but, what is more, to help in the collection of all information regarding the location of nuclear sites, their elements and components and to cooperate in the preparation of a plan that would be in keeping with Iraq's obligations under the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1968, and to allow permanent inspection and verification in the future.

The delegation of Ecuador does not want to venture any speculations regarding Iraq's failure to comply with these obligations. We do not want to infer any ulterior motive to interfere with the destruction, removal or neutralization of nuclear facilities that might be capable of producing weapons of this kind.

Ecuador would not like to conclude that Iraq's position regarding the Special Commission is a demonstration of the position the Iraqi Government will take on all the other obligations under resolution 687 (1991), nor do we wish to believe that the Government of Baghdad has any intention of trying to evade the nuclear embargo. Though as a matter of principle Ecuador can accept that Iraq's position in this matter is out of keeping with the circumstances and can be immediately rectified, we believe that Iraq must try to appreciate

(Mr. Fosso Serrano, Ecuador)

the risks involved in this position in the opinion of its neighbours.

Ecuador would therefore support an appeal to the Government of Baghdad that it fully comply with this and other obligations stemming from resolution 687 (1991). We believe that there is an overriding need for Iraq to spare its civilian population any further anguish and to realize the implications of resolution 687 (1991) for the strengthening of peace and stability in the region, which has been subjected to such great suffering because of the arms race and the constant threat of force.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Ecuador for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. MUNTEANU (Romania): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on the manner in which you are conducting the work of the Council this month, and also to extend our thanks to Ambassador Li Daoyu of China for the way in which he guided the Council's activities last month.

My delegation supported the urgent convening of the Security Council in a formal meeting because of the serious nature of the information which has been brought to our attention in connection with Iraq's implementation of some specific provisions of resolution 687 (1991).

Since the very first days and weeks of the crisis in the Gulf, Romania has consistently advocated Iraq's full implementation of all resolutions adopted by the Security Council. In recent months we have had the occasion to reiterate our position in that respect while working with other members of the Security Council on various sections of resolution 687 (1991).

This time the Secretary-General submitted to the Council some documentation strengthened further by additional data on the difficulties

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

which have emerged in the cooperation between Iraq and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the Special Commission nuclear inspection team appointed pursuant to part C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). In fact, this international team was denied access to designated facilities which the Government of Iraq had been notified to submit to urgent on-site inspection in accordance with the terms of resolution 687 (1991).

From the documentation submitted by the Secretary-General we have learned that the Iraqi authorities have denied the international team access to the locations and facilities which the team wished to inspect. I will not go into additional detail, as other speakers have already provided clarification.

My delegation wishes to express its serious concern that in spite of their earlier promises the Iraqi authorities have not fulfilled their obligations in so important and sensitive a field as the nuclear one.

At a time when the question of the elimination of nuclear weapons is perhaps more topical than ever, the preoccupation of my Government with Iraq's fulfillment of its obligation not to possess or acquire nuclear weapons and to accept international inspections of all its nuclear facilities, is a legitimate one. Such concerns and apprehensions are indeed legitimate and well founded, as the area of the Persian Gulf is not so distant from our own geographic area, which we are making every effort to keep free from nuclear weapons.

To summarize, we fully share the grave concern expressed by the Secretary-General over the recent events in Iraq. We therefore support the appeal addressed to Iraq that it implement fully and in good faith the relevant provisions of resolution 687 (1991), and in particular those authorizing on-site international inspections.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

The Iraqi Government should understand that it is in its own interest to make every effort to comply, without hesitation or reservations, with its international obligations. Iraq has to prove by its actual conduct that there is harmony between its deeds and its statements. It is only through honest behaviour, strictly consistent with the Security Council resolutions, that Iraq can illustrate its peaceful intentions and resume its place among peace-loving members of the international community.

It is in the light of those considerations that my delegation joins other delegations in asking Iraq to demonstrate its wisdom and sense of realism by respecting and implementing, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. AL-ANBARI (Iraq): I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the wise and courteous way in which you are guiding the Council's proceedings. I wish also to express my thanks and admiration to your predecessor, Ambassador Li of China.

Since the Security Council adopted its resolution 687 (1991) on 3 April, Iraq has accepted it and has done its best to implement all the requirements and obligations imposed on it by the resolution. We have cooperated with all United Nations agencies, commissions and missions, and we have evidence to prove this. We have done so particularly with the Commission entrusted with the task of destroying all the weapons of mass destruction and other weapons mentioned in the resolution - and this has been true from the very first day.

The IAEA mission had visited Iraq before and made it very clear to the public that it was very appreciative of the cooperation by the Iraqi authorities.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

During the IAEA mission's second visit - the current one - Iraq has also extended full cooperation. The mission has visited a number of sites. It was only the last one that could not be made available to it - for one day, for practical reasons. May I remind the members of the Security Council that Iraq's entire communication system has been destroyed. The military base that the mission wanted to inspect is far from the centre of Baghdad and was not easy to reach by telephone or telex; there simply were no communications. I would also remind the members of the Council that the Commission insisted - and Iraq responded positively - that Iraq should put at its disposal all the facilities it required, including transportation and interpretation. So if we are asking the Commission to give us advance notice, it is because we need such notice simply to provide the facilities asked for by it.

I believe that no fair-minded person could draw the conclusion that the fact that the inspection was delayed for one day means that Iraq acted in bad faith or intended to remove certain prohibited materials. If Iraq had had such an intention, it would not have waited for more than 80 days since the adoption of the resolution on 3 April to take such action - and, after all, it knew that the Commission was in Baghdad to inspect various sites.

I fully understand the concern and interest of the members of the Council. Indeed, the issue is very sensitive and very critical. But I really feel that, given the lack of concrete evidence of the non-cooperation of the Iraqi authorities with the IAEA mission, we are faced with a non-issue. Iraq is fully cooperating and will continue to do so. We have made our commitment, and there is no way of going back on it.

That is why I am a bit perplexed about the motive behind this campaign. Is it to prepare world public opinion for another military attack against Iraq, like the one that took place in the past? Is it to perpetuate the

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

economic sanctions imposed on the people of Iraq, including the children? Or is the campaign designed to justify the occupation of the northern part of Iraq? I hope that none of this will turn out to be true, but I have to wait and see.

Perhaps the best answer would be for Iraq's commitment to be confirmed at the highest level - and I remember that one representative made such a request. So, with your permission, Mr. President, I shall now read out parts of the statement issued this morning by our Foreign Minister in Baghdad. He said:

(spoke in Arabic)

"Some diplomatic sources have claimed that Iraq has denied the Special Commission of the United Nations access to one of its nuclear facilities near Baghdad in order to inspect it, and that the United Nations was not officially informed of its existence. This is a fabrication, meant to put Iraq and its clear position of cooperation with the United Nations in ill repute on purpose.

"The correct information is the following:

"The inspection team requested to be allowed to visit Iraq and to inspect the nuclear material and facilities during the Holy Day of the Feast of the Sacrifice. We said that the Feast of the Sacrifice is an official holiday; indeed, it is one of the most important religious holidays for Muslims in Iraq and throughout the world. Therefore, we advised the inspection team to postpone the visit until after the holiday. Arabs and Muslims respect the holidays of others, and others should respect our holidays, including our religious holidays. However, the inspection team insisted on its position and said that it wanted to

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

come to Baghdad to deliver a letter to the Iraqi Foreign Minister. When it reached Iraq, I interrupted my holiday and received the team in the evening of 22 June - the first day of the Feast of the Sacrifice. I received the letter.

"During the meeting, the inspection team said that it wanted to visit a site near Baghdad. It turned out to be a military site within a military zone composed of this and other such sites coming under the Ministry of Defence and not the Ministry of Industry and Mineralogy.

"Despite the difficulties - most of the officials in these places were enjoying the holiday - we did our best to obtain the agreement of the military authorities so that the inspection team could visit that site.

"When the team reached the site, it wanted to visit other sites within the same military zone. We could not secure the approval of the officer-in-charge, because he had not received instructions to allow anyone to go to those sites. It is a well-known practice in all countries that military sites cannot be visited without approval being obtained through the normal procedures.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

"In his statement the Minister said that, when we heard from the Team that it could not visit the other sites it wanted to visit, we gave the reasons and we contacted the Iraqi authorities concerned and requested them to give instructions to the officer-in-charge in order to allow the Inspection Team to visit these sites.

"The visit to the said sites was arranged as of 7 a.m. on 26 June, Baghdad time.

"In his statement the Minister said that the Inspection Team of the United Nations visited on 23 June 1991 the sites belonging to the IAEA. The Team also requested, on 25 June, to visit two other sites belonging to the Ministry of Industry, and the Iraqi authorities agreed promptly and easily because the request of the Team was clear and definitive. This is the clearest evidence of Iraqi cooperation with the United Nations; and it is proof which belies those who try to fish in troubled waters in order to serve their interests.

"The Minister also confirmed the established position of Iraq based on cooperation with the United Nations and the Secretary-General and he said that the United Nations Team confirmed in its press statement after its visit to the country from 9 to 14 June that it could not prove the existence of any undeclared activities relating to the biological and nuclear capacity of Iraq and missiles and the sites. The Team did not find any indication that Iraq is trying on purpose to mislead the Mission. The position of the Iraqi authorities was a position of cooperation."

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

The Minister also said that Iraq observes a very clear position based on cooperation with all authorities and bodies sent by the Secretary-General and the United Nations to Iraq and, therefore, the Iraqi authorities concerned have dealt positively with the Team headed by Mr. Zifferero, Action Team Leader to verify the presence of nuclear materials, even though it had chosen a very unsuitable time to carry out a visit.

As I have mentioned, first, the Team insisted that it should come during the Feast of the Sacrifice, which is a very important religious holiday for all Iraqis; secondly, the Team requested to visit sites which do not belong to the Ministry of Industry, and this required more time in order to secure the agreement of the Iraqi authorities.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister concluded by saying that we completely deny the news propagated by some news agencies which claim that Iraq denied access to certain facilities in Iraq. We also condemn the behaviour of certain authorities which only try to spread lies in order to save their interests.

In conclusion, I should like to confirm to you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Council that Iraq is honest and sincere in its cooperation with all the missions of the United Nations, including the Special Commission established under Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Iraq for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are no further speakers on my list for this meeting. Before adjourning the meeting, I invite the members of the Security Council to attend informal consultations immediately after this meeting.

The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.

